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Cuba Seen Releasing PWs Soon

Donovan in Havana To Seal Accord With Castro

By George Arnold
HAVANA, Dec. 18 (AP)

American negotiator James B. Donovan arrived today to try to seal with Fidel Castro the barter deal for freedom of 1113 invasion prisoners.

Optimism that the Bay of Pigs captives might be released by Christmas or soon thereafter, was expressed by their relatives here and in Miami.

Donovan, New York attorney who engineered the swap of American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers for Russian spy

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Rudolph Abel, flew here from Miami accompanied by three Cuban negotiators.

They were reported to have gone to the home of Beria Barreto, one of the four negotiators. Previous talks on the prisoners' release were held there.

Also arriving were Alvaro Sanchez and Virginia Betancourt, officials of the Cuban Families Committee composed of prisoners' relatives.

Relatives in Cuba were jubilant. They heard over United States and Cuban radio that an American freighter was ready to deliver food and medicine in exchange for the captives.

Asked Cash at First

Castro demanded \$62 million for their freedom, and later agreed to food and medicine he valued at \$62 million.

Steaming from Baltimore to Port Everglades, Fla., north of Miami, was the S.S. African Pilot. The 435-foot freighter, chartered by the Farrell Lines to the American Red Cross, which assumed sponsorship of the prisoner exchange, is expected at the Florida port Thursday.

The Red Cross was stockpiling food and medicine gifts in warehouses at Opa-Locka air field in the Miami area.

Get Donations

W. D. Dibrow, southeastern United States disaster director for the Red Cross, said the donations would be transferred to the African Pilot or other vessels designated for transportation if the swap materializes. He said many contributions had been received from pharmaceutical companies.

In Washington, State Department sources said Donovan and the committee were quite successful in soliciting U. S. drug firms offering the medicines.

Lincoln White, State Department press officer, declined comment when asked whether the U. S. Government contributed money or food and medicine for the release of the prisoners.

President Kennedy and U. S. Government agencies are taking the position that the release efforts are a private undertaking in which the Government is not taking part.